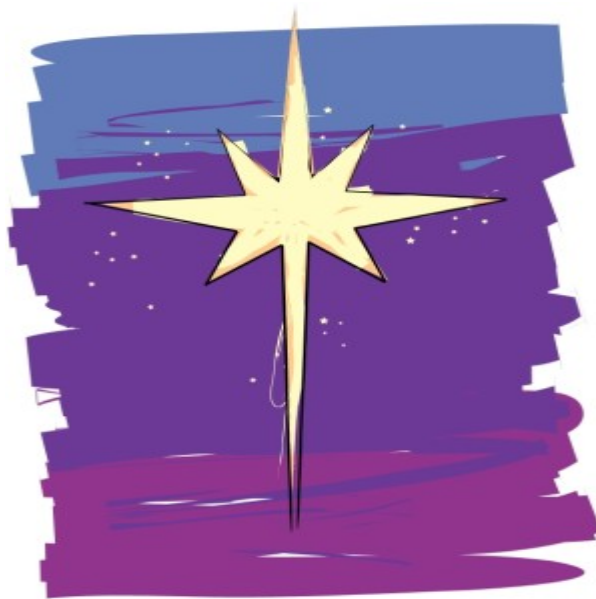


“Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ”



A PARISH ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE

This sacramental celebration of reconciliation links into the “Liturgy of Hope” of December 3rd, in the following ways:

- By taking its central message of God’s love and reminding us that this is precisely what we celebrate in this sacrament – God’s love is enduring and faithful.
- Through the use of the “Romans” text within the liturgy of the Word.
- By drawing on the image of light in the litany of thanksgiving after individual confession and absolution. The candles of people will be lit for this litany – echoing the light of the Liturgy of Hope.

Preparing the Space

Before the liturgy begins, the Advent wreath should be lit with the appropriate number of candles. Those preparing the liturgy might give some consideration to the lighting & heating in the Church as well as preparing the space if there are to be a number of stations for individual confession. Perhaps a station might be marked by a couple of seats and a lit candle.

An atmosphere of quiet reflection might be supported by instrumental music or a sung prelude piece, i.e. “Waiting in Silence” by Carey Landry

Hospitality

As people gather some members of the liturgy group or hospitality ministry might be at the doors of the Church to greet them and to give them a leaflet for the service. For this particular liturgy people will also need a candle, similar to the one used in the liturgy of hope. This can also be given as people enter the Church.

ORDER OF SERVICE

INTRODUCTORY RITES

OPENING PROCESSION:

In a spirit of quiet prayer and reflection the presider, as well as the ministers of reconciliation, are already seated throughout the Church for a number of minutes before the liturgy begins. When time, the preside stands and the cantor invites the people to stand and join in singing: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel..." or another suitable communal hymn.

GREETING: May the Lord who loves and forgives us be with you.

WORDS OF WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:

The presider welcomes people at this point and invites them to enter into this journey of receiving God's love and forgiveness into their lives, as they prepare to welcome Christ – who showed the depth of God's love for us - at Christmas.

OPENING PRAYER:

Let us pray,

Lord our God,
You have loved us from the beginning
with a love that knows no limits.
On this Advent night
help us to welcome this love into our lives once more.
Help us to turn away from all that might try to separate us from you.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please be seated as we listen to the word of God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING:

Romans 8: 35,37-39
(Lectionary I, page 686)

Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or

being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

Silence

PSALM:

Psalm 85/25

Sung or recited as resources allow

Silence

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the handmaid of the Lord:
Let what you have said be done to me. Alleluia!

GOSPEL:

Luke 1:39-44

(Lectionary I, page 75)

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

The Gospel of the Lord.

HOMILY:

The reading from Romans is a confident reminder to us in times of doubt or guilt that God's love is stronger than any human desires, temptations or trials that come our way.

In the Advent season we are reminded that we can begin anew, that we can change our direction in life and transform our situation. Advent is a

great season of new birth, of allowing God's light into the dark corners of our lives to be transformed.

Elizabeth and Mary are models for us of how to welcome Christ and Christ's love into our lives. Welcoming Christ into our lives is life-giving, it is something of joy, something worth sharing with others...

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE: see appendix for sample

RITE OF RECONCILIATION

GENERAL CONFESSION OF SINS: Together we pray: I confess to...

LITANY: Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Let us ask God to forgive us and bind up the wounds caused by our sin:

God of love and mercy, give us the grace of true repentance. Lord have mercy. R. Lord have mercy.

Pardon us, your servants, and release us from the bondage of sin. Lord have mercy. R.

Forgive your children who confess their sins and restore them to unity with you and the Church. Lord have mercy. R.

Renew your love in our hearts, and help us to bear witness to it in our daily lives. Lord have mercy. R.

Keep us faithful to your commandments of love and service. Lord have mercy. R.

OUR FATHER: Let us now pray to God our Father in the words Christ gave us... Our Father...

The Presider concludes:

Lord, Draw near to your servants

Who in the presence of your Church

Confess that they are sinners.

Through the ministry of the Church

Free them from all sin

So that renewed in spirit they may give you thankful praise. AMEN.

INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Any necessary instruction can be given at this point – this may include the instruction for people to remain in the Church to conclude our prayer together.

Music ministers might lead the assembly in some suitable reflective pieces.

PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE FOR GOD'S MERCY WITH LIGHTING OF CANDLES

When the individual confessions have been completed, the presider lights a taper from the paschal candle and lights the candles of a number of pre-assigned hospitality ministers. These ministers bring the light out to the body of the Church.

Once the light has been shared the proclamation is introduced in these or similar words...

We have celebrated God's love and mercy. On this Advent night, we share the light that this love brings to our world as we stand united in praise of our God.

Based on psalm 100: led by a reader with people's response:

1. Shout joy to the Lord, all earth,
Serve the Lord with gladness,
Enter God's presence with joy.

R. Nothing can separate us from the love of God

2 Know that the Lord is God,
Our maker to whom we belong,
Our shepherd, and we the flock. R.

3 Enter the temple gates
the courtyard with thanks
and praise;
Give thanks and bless
God's name. R.

4 Indeed the Lord is good!
God's love is for ever,
Faithful from age to age. R.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ
May the God of love
Fill your hearts with joy and every blessing.
When he comes, may he find you watching in prayer
With hearts filled with wonder and praise.
And may almighty God bless you...

CLOSING HYMN:

Christ be our Light
by Bernadette Farrell

The following Examination of Conscience is printed with permission from
Deacon Denny Duffell, St. Bridget Parish, Seattle, Washington.

For failings in our private life:

When we have abused or neglected the gifts of body or spirit God has
given us:

When we have overindulged in food, alcohol, drugs, or other cravings

Whenever we have become too complacent or self-satisfied

For ever being too afraid or lazy to do the right thing,

For any personal decisions, habits, or attitudes that keep us from being
the child of God that we are called to be.

Sung response: Kyrie, kyrie, eleison

For failings in our families:

When we have hurt or neglected our families

When we have withheld our love from those closest to us

When we have been too guarded or afraid to reach out

When we have withdrawn into our own pursuits

Whenever we have argued too easily

Whenever we have deliberately hurt

For ever failing to help when needed

For ever failing to say we were sorry

For ever failing to say we were wrong

For ever failing to be a sign of God's love and grace to those we know
we should love the most. Sung response: Kyrie, kyrie, eleison

For failures in our communities:

When we have hurt or neglected our communities – our friends and neighbours, our Church, our country, our world

When we have held back and let others do it

When we have said we would do our part and let it slide

When we have been a disruptive force because of our own ego

When we could have been a peacemaker but kept quiet

Whenever we have excluded others intentionally

Whenever we have taken more for ourselves when others went lacking

Whenever we have ignored others who were in need

For ever choosing to keep to ourselves and not wanting or trying to be in community with others

For any failing in being a neighbour to others. Sung response: Kyrie, kyrie, eleison

Finally, for our failures with our God:

When we have failed to put our relationship with God first

For the times when we chose to leave God out of our life

When we have failed to make time for regular private prayer

When we have failed to make time for worship with others

When we have made important choices in our life without listening for God's voice speaking to us

For ever holding back when our God was calling us to be an instrument of grace

When others have been in need or in doubt and we have been too afraid to share the Good News of God's presence in our lives

When we have failed to offer back to God gifts we have been given – our time, our talents, our treasures, our service, our lives

For those times when we were in need of grace from God but were too proud or afraid to ask .

Sung response: Kyrie, kyrie, eleison